



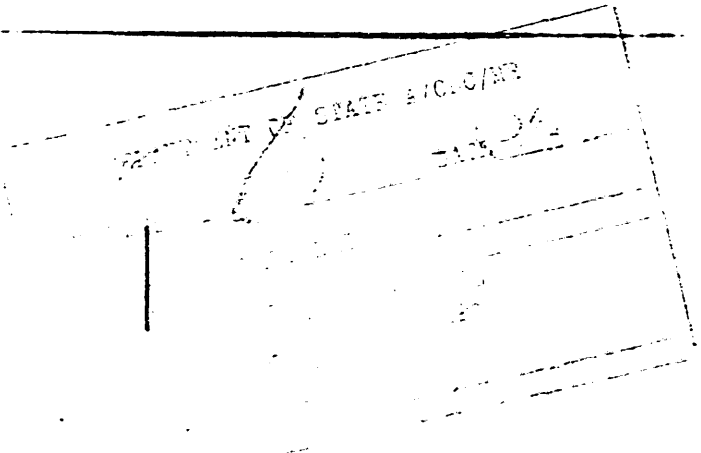
Department of State

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TELEGRAM

S/S-O:WFOPE:EO
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ROUTINE

ALDAC,

CFR REPORT, INFORM CONSULS, CINC/SHAPE FOR POLADS ONLY

E.O. 12065: GDS 9/19/85 (ROPE, WILLIAM F.)

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(U) TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1. PA - SUPPORT FOR SALT CONTINUES TO SLIP	2
2. AF - ZIMBABWE/RHODESIA - LONDON CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE BEGINS	3
3. AF - ANGOLA: NETO'S DEATH	4
4. AF - FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION	5
5. RNEA - TARAKI FALLS, AMIN TAKES OVER IN AFGHANISTAN	7
6. RIO - KAMPUCHEAN CREDENTIALS AT THE UN	8
7. RARA - BRAZIL: EXILES RETURN	9
8. RARA - U.S. TALKS WITH ANDEAN PACT	1
9. RARA - INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION VISITS ARGENTINA	10
10. EB - POSITIVE ACTION BY WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (WFC)	11
11. EB - COMMON FUND: INTERIM COMMITTEE OFF TO A SLOW START	12
12. FINR - USSR: MAJOR WHOLESALE PRICE REVISION AHEAD	13

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5. NEA - TARAKI FALLS, AMIN TAKES OVER IN AFGHANISTAN
{GDS 9/19/85}

{C} NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI'S RESIGNATION DUE TO "ILL HEALTH" WAS ANNOUNCED IN KABUL SEPTEMBER 16 SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE NAMING OF PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN TO TARAKI'S POSTS OF PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY. AMIN, WHO HAD LONG BEEN REGARDED AS THE AFGHAN REGIME'S STRONGMAN, THUS GAINS COMPLETE CONTROL OVER BOTH THE GOVERNMENTAL AND PARTY APPARATUS. TWO DAYS EARLIER, THE REMAINING MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE CABINET, INCLUDING 1973 AND 1978 COUP LEADER WATANJAR, WERE DISMISSED. NOTHING IS KNOWN REGARDING THE FATE OF TARAKI OR THE OUSTED MILITARY LEADERS, WHO IF STILL AT LARGE COULD REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO AMIN'S SURVIVAL.

{C} THE SEQUENCE AND DETAILS OF RECENT EVENTS IN KABUL REMAIN SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. AMONG OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS, WE STILL DO NOT KNOW WHAT PRECIPITATED THESE CHANGES. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PRESS SPECULATION THAT TARAKI MAY BE DEAD OR MAY HAVE BEEN WOUNDED IN A SHOOTOUT AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ON THE 14TH. THE ONLY CONFIRMED DEATH AT THAT INCIDENT WAS THAT OF TARAKI'S AIDE-DE-CAMP AND FORMER POLICE CHIEF SAYED DAUD TAROON.

{C} WE HAVE NO WAY TO JUDGE THE SOVIET ATTITUDE SO FAR, BUT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT AMIN WAS NOT THE SOVIET'S FAVORITE AFGHAN LEADER. AMIN HAS REPORTEDLY FAVORED A CONFRONTATIONAL LINE ON RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, PUSHED FOR RAPID EXECUTION OF DOMESTIC REFORMS AND STRENUOUSLY OPPOSED BROADENING THE POLITICAL BASE OF THE REGIME -- ALL AREAS IN WHICH THE SOVIETS CLAIM TO HAVE URGED MODERATION OR CAUTION. WE EXPECT THAT THE SOVIETS WILL SEE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO SUPPORT AMIN, BUT CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT NOT OPPOSE A MOVE AGAINST HIM FROM HIS MANY ENEMIES IN THE PARTY AND MILITARY.